



news from the

Department of Community and Human Services

alexandria community services board



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A New Lease on Life: Co-locating Behavioral and Primary Health Care

Through a grant called *A New Lease on Life*, the Alexandria CSB, the Arlington CSB and Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services (ANHSI) are collaborating to place primary care physicians on-site at CSB mental health programs and also provide psychiatric services on-site at the ANHSI clinic.

Recent evidence reveals that persons with serious mental illness live on average 25 years less than other people, making the need for integration of care urgent. This initiative was designed to reduce disparities in care, address access and compliance issues, and ultimately improve health outcomes for this vulnerable population.

The persons in CSB programs typically have multiple serious primary health needs. One person served, an uninsured 60-year-old man who had not seen a doctor in 16 years, had 10 diagnoses following his first primary care appointment, including diabetes, abnormal electrocardiogram, high blood pressure and respiratory ailments. He received referrals for care, which will be coordinated by his case manager, and he will have follow-ups at the on-site primary care clinic.

Mike Gilmore, Executive Director of the Alexandria CSB, said, "Many primary care physicians are reluctant to serve these individuals because they do not understand the



Primary care physician Dr. Selim examines a patient at the Mental Health Center.

behavioral characteristics of serious mental illness and they are often uncomfortable prescribing the needed medications. For those receiving behavioral health services at the CSB, the environment is

The Department of Community and Human Services is comprised of programs from three formerly separate departments: The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse; Human Services and the Office on Women. While the Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) will continue oversight of mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse programs, the CSB newsletter will now feature programs from across the new department.

To receive this newsletter by email, call 703-746-3484 or email jennifer.cohen@alexandriava.gov.



familiar and it is their best medical home." Another benefit from integration is that both the primary care physician and the psychiatrist can share the medical record and develop an integrated plan for treatment and medication.

From September through December, 90 individuals were seen at the Alexandria CSB.

Public Comment

The proposed FY 2012 Community Services Board Performance Contract is available for public comment at alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa. The Performance Contract contains agreements between the Alexandria CSB and the State Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. It serves as the primary accountability and funding mechanism for the relationship between CSBs and the State by setting reporting requirements and funding levels.

Send comments to Paul Gilding, Contracting Director, (paul.gilding@dbhs.virginia.gov) and copy Mike Gilmore, Executive Director of the Alexandria CSB (mike.gilmore@alexandriava.gov) and Jim Fleming, Fiscal Officer (jim.fleming@alexandriava.gov). Comments accepted through March 3, 2011. The final Performance Contract will be distributed May 6, 2011.

A Caring Community Promoting Respect, Recovery, Hope

Finding Homes for Children: Resource Unit Recognized

The DCHS Resource Unit received the *Outstanding Service Award on Behalf of Children Awaiting Adoption in Virginia* from ADOPT, an organization that promotes and assures the rights of children to permanent homes. ADOPT members include professionals from private and public child welfare agencies, adoptive parents, therapists, attorneys and others engaged in the work of assuring that children find forever homes.

The Resource Unit's participation in ADOPT has been significant to the Unit's success. Since 2006, 21 of Alexandria's waiting children have found homes through ADOPT Match Parties, Match Retreats and the linking of Alexandria children with families in other ADOPT jurisdictions.

Beyond involvement with ADOPT, the Resource Unit is proactive in attracting resource parents who foster and/or adopt children. The Unit conducts community information sessions, home assessments and develops a clear understanding of expectations with resource parents.

Alexandria launched CARPA, the City of Alexandria

Resource Parent Association. Staff and three volunteer resource parents are building CARPA for resource families to share ideas and mutually support one another.

In 2010, Alexandria had its highest annual number of finalized adoptions and a home was identified for every child with a plan of adoption. Of 34 adoptions, 15 children were adopted by their Alexandria resource families, seven by their relatives, and 12 by families identified through recruitment efforts. With strong support from parents, the Resource Unit is well positioned to build on its 2010 success. For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/Fostercare.

Resource Unit Social Workers, (Back):
Odessa Becker,
Michele Mintling,
Chrissy Levine,
Diana Tracy and
Dahlia Foreman;
(Front): Bette Smith,
Suzanne Kratzok and
Greta Rosenzweig.



DCHS Staff vs. Special Olympics Basketball Champs

The Bellefonte Wizards' team members live in Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) residential programs that assist adults with intellectual disabilities. Since their emergence, the Wizards finished their first season undefeated in the region and won second place in the Senior Division of the Virginia Special Olympics. Last December, they were challenged by a team of DCHS staff from across the Department. Director Mike Gilmore coached the staff team, the Shooting Stars. Final score: 22:20, Wizards.



On the left in dark uniforms, the Wizards.
On the right, DCHS staff team players and cheerleaders.

Intellectual Disability Residential Services has been transforming how services are delivered to Alexandrians with intellectual disabilities by actively using self-determination and person centered practices. Program Director Allyson Coleman said, "Real Life Happens Here!"

We create an environment healthy enough for real life to happen as the individuals we work with are fully included and participate in the community. The journey of the Wizards is a culmination of our efforts and is aligned with The ARC of Northern Virginia's vision of supporting people to achieve ALLY: A Life Like Yours!



Exemplifying Person Centered Practices:
In the foreground, client Chris "Speedy" Jones of the Wizards, and in the background, those who support him: Residential Senior Counselor and Wizards Coach Peter Mathews (left) and DCHS Director Mike Gilmore, also Coach of the DCHS Shooting Stars.

Schedule a Group Presentation on Risky Behaviors

The Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria, the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy and the Gang Prevention Community Task Force have developed *It's Never Too Early and Never Too Late to Talk to Your Kids*, a community presentation that teaches parents how to talk to the youth in their lives about sex, drugs and violence and how to prevent involvement.

Parents learn why youth become pregnant, join gangs and use alcohol and drugs. They learn the warning signs to determine if their teen is sexually active, using drugs or alcohol, or involved in a gang. Through role play and open discussion, parents can practice how to talk to their teens about these risky behaviors.

The presentation is approximately 1.5 hours, and can be shortened if needed. If you are interested in attending or hosting a presentation for your group in the City of Alexandria, please contact Shelly Morgan at shellymorgan@comcast.net. For more information about the sponsoring organizations, visit: alexgetreal.com (Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent

Pregnancy), preventitalexandria.org (Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria) and alexandriava.gov/gangprevention (Gang Prevention Community Task Force).

sometimes life can get pretty confusing...



text "sex" to 30644

for questions about love,
sex, and relationships

text "drugs" to 30644

for information on drugs,
alcohol and substance abuse

text "gang" to 30644

Msg & Data Rates May Apply
(it's just like texting a friend.)

for concerns about gangs
and teen violence

...if you have questions, we've got answers!

Treating Mental Illness in the Community and Jails

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and City of Alexandria officials held a 1.5 day work session to develop integrated strategies for identifying and responding to the needs of justice-involved adults with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

Hosted by Police Chief Earl Cook, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne and Liz Wixson, DCHS Director of Clinical



Deputy City Manager Michele Evans, Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, Director of Clinical and Emergency Services Liz Wixson, DCHS Director Mike Gilmore, Mayor William D. Euille and Police Chief Earl Cook.

and Emergency Services, a group of City employees, elected officials and community experts met to develop a plan to halt the recidivistic criminal justice cycle experienced by many persons with mental illness. Mayor William D. Euille, City Manager Jim Hartmann, Commonwealth Attorney Randy Sengel, Public Defender Melinda Douglas, and several judges were in attendance, as were key leaders from across Alexandria's criminal justice and mental health systems.

Using a tool developed by Policy Research Associates, attendees identified existing community resources, service gaps and opportunities for improved service coordination between mental health, substance abuse and criminal justice professionals. Participants developed a map detailing the flow of criminal justice contact from arrest to incarceration, referral and access to services, and points for diversion from the justice system. The workshop was intended to foster systemic change and provide the community with the tools necessary to enhance services for adults with mental illness (*continued on the next page*)



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Jail Diversion *(continued from page 3)*

and co-occurring substance use disorders who come in contact with the justice system.

Individuals with co-occurring disorders are an increasing presence in the criminal justice system. In July 2010, 45% (114 of 256) Alexandria Detention Center inmates (non-Federal) had a mental illness diagnosis; half of them with a serious mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression). National studies have shown that 6.4% of men and 12.2% of women entering U.S. jails have a serious and persistent mental illness, compared to less than 2% of the general population. Of these individuals, 72% have a co-occurring substance use disorder. Because these individuals who enter jail will return to the community, effective linkage and access to services is critical in reducing the repetitious cycle of justice involvement.

For more information, visit alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa, Jail Diversion.



Judge Constance Frogale of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and Judge Lisa Kemler of the Circuit Court, two of four judges who attended the work session.

To make comments, suggestions for story ideas or contributions to this newsletter, call Jennifer Cohen at 703.746.3484 or email jennifer.cohen@alexandriava.gov. Contributors: Martha Boyer (photo), Mike Gilmore, Jan Schrader, Dara Schumaier.

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